

Arts Council England's response to Creative Scotland's draft Creative Industries Strategy



Introduction

Arts Council England's mission is 'great art and culture for everyone' and we work to achieve this by championing, developing and investing in arts and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives, enabling new artistic developments, realising talent, and championing culture in public policy. As the development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England, we support a range of activities from theatre to music, reading to dance, photography to digital art, carnival to crafts. We support and invest in high quality arts practice and the best emerging practitioners that represent the backbone of our cultural infrastructure and contribute to the future of England's dynamic creative economy.

In delivering our mission 'Great art and culture for everyone' we work closely with local government across England and recognise the potential for increased collaboration between the constituent parts of the UK to develop the cultural life of the nation for the benefit of all its citizens. There are effective collaborations in place across the UK constituent nations. We enjoy strong working relationships at many levels between our organisations. We invest alongside Creative Scotland, Arts Council Wales and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in cross-border touring¹. We have also jointly invested in activity where all citizens of the UK stand to benefit, for instance in support of Derry/Londonderry's year as UK City of Culture 2013, the First World War Centenary and the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

We welcome the approach put forward in Creative Scotland's draft Creative Industries Strategy. Below we respond to the key areas where Creative Scotland and Arts Council England might work together and share learning to support the delivery of this strategy and deliver positive benefits for audiences, artists, organisations and practitioners in Scotland, England and the rest of the UK.

Place-based approach

We welcome the strategy's focus on place. There is much potential for more effective place-based policy making across the UK to enable culture to add even greater value to local, regional and national life. Investing in culture can deliver significant economic as well as social and cultural value.

¹ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/our-investment-2015-18/strategic-funds/developing-reach/>

Earlier this year we launched the Creative Local Growth Fund², an initiative that seeks to put arts and culture at the heart of growth plans by: securing long term partnership between LEPs, Arts Council England and other local partners to support the cultural sector; helping to leverage European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) investment within the LEP area into the cultural sector; and investing in new approaches to achieve these objectives, while at the same time developing learning that can inform policy and practice. We would be happy to share such learning as it emerges.

Digital and technological innovation

Earlier this year, we launched the Arts and Technology Pilot Programme³ in partnership with Innovate UK. This programme resulted from a shared recognition of the importance of arts and culture as a source of innovation and economic growth and responds to rapid developments in technology and accompanying shifts in ways of working⁴. This programme aims to understand how the economic, social and artistic values generated by such a programme are sustained by businesses and in the wider economy. This programme may be relevant to Creative Scotland's aim to 'innovate for the wider economy' and 'digital' cross-cutting theme. Considering our shared focus in this area, there may be opportunities to collaborate and share learning.

Training and support for micro-businesses

We recognise and share Creative Scotland's commitment to providing support for micro-businesses, sole traders and SMEs who make up a significant proportion of creative businesses in both Scotland and England. In 2014 the Arts Council England-supported Creative Industry Finance scheme was rolled out across England to provide business support and access to finance to micro-businesses and SMEs⁵. Our existing partnership model of close collaborative working around the Creative Europe Desk UK⁶ is one that might be replicated in future on targeted creative industries business support and digital innovation.

Research and the value of the arts, culture and creative industries

² <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/apply-for-funding/creative-local-growth-fund/>

³ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/arts-and-technology-pilot-programme/>

⁴ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/new-programme-supports-artists-working-technology/>

⁵ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/creative-industry-finance-launches-throughout-engl/>

⁶ <http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/about-creative-europe-desk-uk>

A number of projects are underway across England that explore the value of arts and culture and the creative industries and the broader value this sector has on the economy, society and on place. Through our research programme and joint research commissioning partnerships we aim to build collective knowledge and understanding about the impact of arts and culture and the creative industries on audiences and society. For the past year, we have been working with partners from across Europe on an evidence review of the spillover effects of the arts, culture and creative industries⁷. This research agenda may help deliver against the aims of the Creative Industries strategy (e.g. Priority and action 2.5). We will shortly launch the review and invite Creative Scotland to consider how they might work with our European partnership as we move forward with a next stage of research.

We look forward to working closely with Creative Scotland to identify any opportunities for shared learning through jointly commissioned research around the Creative Industries or on other topics as appropriate.

We welcome Creative Scotland's continued commitment to widely promoting and developing a diverse workforce in the creative industries, and to increasing awareness of best practice initiatives and research that support this.

Export and international working

We share an awareness of the huge benefits to be gained from cultural export and exchange and partnership working in this area. International collaborations between artists and creative practitioners constantly improve the available cultural offer for audiences. Working internationally also gives our artists, cultural and creative leaders the opportunity to develop new markets and audiences overseas.

We work in partnership with others such as British Council, BFI and UKTI to use our investment to support the growth of our artists and organisations' international ambitions. Along with Creative Scotland and the other UK Arts Councils, we support the Creative Europe Desk UK to provide an enhanced information and advice-giving service to applicants for funding. We are currently working with the desk in England to make more tailored capacity building support available, particularly in terms of access to financial advice and project management training. Such skills deficits and training offers may also be pertinent to creative businesses in Scotland. This model of UK-wide investment and service provision might be a good one for joint working around further support to our creative industries.

⁷ <http://ccspillovers.wikispaces.com/>

Similarly, we have worked with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), the British Council and the Culture Diary over the past year to better promote a more joined-up offer of advice and support on cultural export for cultural organisations in England. We have begun a series of seminars to which Visit Britain and the GREAT campaign have also contributed in order to share experience and knowledge with, and among, practitioners. This learning is relevant to the creative industries and we would be happy to share our experiences to date.

We are also currently undertaking some benchmarking research as part of our work on cultural export and exchange, in order to gain a richer insight into what international activity means to the organisations that we fund. We want to understand how it fits into their business models and helps supports the sustainability and creativity of the organisation. We also want to learn about the challenges of this work and how we might better support this work. We would expect that many of the barriers and challenges to international working might be similar for creative industry SMEs in Scotland and would be happy to share the results of this research once it is completed in 2016.

We note with interest the action at A4.3 around enabling 'go and see' international travel opportunities for creative businesses. We would be happy to share our experience of running the Artists International Development Fund (AIDF)⁸, funded jointly with the British Council. Individuals working in fashion, design and architecture are eligible for this opportunity. We will share the evaluation of this programme in 2016 and would be interested in exploring any potential for taking a more joined-up approach on support for UK individuals to access mobility grants.

Finally, as a Designated Competent Body for endorsing Tier One Visa recommendations under the Exceptional Talent and Promise routes in England, we have experience in receiving applications from creative individuals who want to work here. We would be happy to talk further about ways in which visa routes for creative individuals wishing to come to the UK could be better promoted.

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⁸ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/apply-for-funding/artists-international-development-fund/>